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Back to School at the NJMC

Hands-on lessons in eco-systems, renewable energy and astronomy enrich young minds

LYNDHURST, N.J. – School is in session at the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission's (NJMC) Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, where thousands of students will learn about the environment first-hand this year through engaging lessons taught by Ramapo College educators.

“The NJMC’s educational programming is a tremendous asset to school systems throughout the region,” said Joseph Doria, Chairman of the NJMC and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. “With top-notch educators and remarkable programs, we can truly enhance the educational experience and inspire a love of learning among students – and their teachers.”

This year the Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC) is offering 25 programs for grades K-12 that incorporate ecology, chemistry, biology, physics, natural history and geology. All classes meet New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. More than 10,000 students from Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Passaic, Union, Morris, and Middlesex counties participated in MEC programs last school year.

Educators added 10 new sessions to this year’s program, many focusing on renewable energy and astronomy. They include “Green and Clean” for grades 4-6, “Power Trip: A Journey into Renewable Energy,” for grades 9-12 and “Studying Stars Near and Far” for grades 7-8. The NJMC’s William D. McDowell Observatory, which includes a research-grade telescope, opened this spring.

This is the first year that school programs are being held at the new Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, which was built to meet increasing demand in the education program. The 10,000 square-foot building houses five classrooms, including a full wet lab.

The center itself is a renewable energy teaching tool. Built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, the facility includes rooftop solar panels and

energy-efficient heating and lighting systems. It was constructed with Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood and recycled and specialized building material.

The NJMC's location in DeKorte Park allows for the classroom to extend beyond the classroom's walls and into the Meadowlands' unique urban wetlands ecosystem. Students observe wildlife and vegetation, visit marshes, participate in bird surveys and test water quality in the field and laboratory.

"The hands-on nature of our programming is a great benefit that helps bring classroom lessons to life," said Robert Ceberio, Executive Director of the NJMC. "Through our unique resources, first-class facility and highly talented educators the NJMC can make a great impact on science and environmental education."

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A description of all programs is attached, with contact and online registration information included. Reporters interested in attending any classes should contact Brian Aberback at 201-460-4619 or brian.aberback@njmeadowlands.gov.